

## **PACE EH in Lee County**

PACE EH (Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health) is a program developed by the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to assess and improve the environmental health of communities. The philosophy and methodology offered in PACE EH incorporates the notion that environmental health (one of the foundations of public health) is protected and improved most effectively when it is defined, understood, and acted upon locally. It is a collaborative effort between residents, local government, and other stakeholders. The bottom line is the prevention of illness, injury and death related to environmental factors through educational outreach, human behavior change, and county and community collaborations. We identify environmental health issues that are important to the community, and develop and implement actions plans to address these issues.

We currently have ongoing PACE EH programs in three Lee County communities: Pine Manor, Charleston Park and Tice.

### **Pine Manor**

Pine Manor was the community we selected for our first PACE EH project because it had the greatest need. We began work in September 2012.



Issues of concern to the Pine Manor community were identified in several ways. Our assessment team developed a community survey that was hand delivered to Pine Manor residents and distributed at the Pine Manor Community Center. We also gathered information on issues through community meetings and speaking individually with residents in the community, and becoming involved in activities of the Pine Manor Improvement Association and their Board of Directors. We also used the results of previous surveys conducted by the Pine Manor Improvement Association. Two ongoing projects, the Community Garden and the Teaching Kitchen, were already in the works when we started PACE EH in Pine Manor. Since these projects were unfinished and of obvious importance to the community, and since they were directly related to priority objectives identified in our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), we integrated them into our PACE EH program.

Many of the priority issues of concern to Pine Manor residents are intricately related to criminal activity and environmental factors that are conducive to criminal activity. Because many of the strategies used to address these issues are the same, they are combined into one action plan to minimize redundancy. Criminal activities of concern include drug trafficking, assault, prostitution, burglary, robbery, domestic violence, theft, and sexual predators. Environmental factors of concern that are considered conducive to criminal activity include poor street lighting at night, adequate police service, and vacant or abandoned houses.

Other action plans that are being developed and implemented in Pine Manor include Lack of Jobs, the Community Garden, and the Teaching Kitchen. None of these plans are static. They are all continually up for review and improvement. Obstacles can arise and plans can change, but we are making progress on many fronts. Some of the accomplishments we have made so far include:

- Improvements to Existing Street Lighting
- Pine Manor Lighting Committee Fully Staffed
- Identified Potential Locations for New Street Lights
- Increased Resident Participation in the Community
- Two New Resident Members to the PMIA Board Sworn In

- Begin Revitalization of the Neighborhood Watch Program
- 13 New Volunteers to Neighborhood Watch
- GATE and Teen Hope Programs
- Background Crime Statistics for 2012 and 2013
- \$6,200 Community Garden & Teaching Kitchen Grant Awarded
- Teaching Kitchen Completed
- First Nutrition and Cooking Class
- First Culinary Summer Camp
- Community Garden Cleared
- Portable Toilet Installed in Hunter Park

### **Charleston Park**

We began work in Charleston Park in August 2013. We are in the process of conducting our issue survey in this community. Approximately one quarter of the community has been surveyed so far, but our goal is to survey the entire community. So far, two issues are showing prominence: Safe Drinking Water (95%) and Meeting Basic Needs (e.g., enough food – 91%). Other top issues of concern are Lack of Jobs, Sewage Disposal, Access to Public Transportation, Roaming Animals, Street Upkeep, and Access to Health Care.

### **Tice**

Our newest PACE EH project is in the Tice community. This is our largest PACE EH community. We began work in Tice around the end of December 2013. We are just now beginning our survey to identify the needs of this community. So far the issues that are emerging include Roaming Animals, Sidewalks/Walkability, Road Safety, and Flooding/Drainage.

### **Scope of PACE EH Projects**

In our view, the scope of our PACE EH projects is basically unlimited. We envision these projects to be continuous; discovering, evaluating, addressing, and re-evaluating issues in an iterative process. Then honing the process; looking at things again and in different ways; discovering, addressing and evaluating again. No community can ever be perfect, and some problems may never be completely solved. But we believe that every situation can be improved. It can be better than it was. Our individual accomplishments don't have to be monumental. We can take many "baby steps" toward evolution of the community. We just want to affect positive change. Using broad definitions of health, public health, environment, and environmental health, there is some aspect of environmental health in almost everything that affects the residents of our communities. So in this sense the scope of these projects is essentially limitless and never ending.

### **[CDC Fact Sheet on Pace-EH](#)**

For More Information on PACE-EH in Lee County contact Geordie Smith at [Geordie.Smith@flheath.gov](mailto:Geordie.Smith@flheath.gov)